

SHE WAS THE EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD INGENUE who stole the show with a breathtaking turn in *Dangerous Liaisons*. Since then the name Uma Thurman has been synonymous with glamour and beauty, so much so there's a line of Lancome lipsticks in Asia named after her. But following her risible attempts at action, as Poison Ivy in *Batman & Robin* and Emma Peel in *The Avengers*, who would've backed her at

name taken from the goddess of light and beauty in Indian mythology, Uma Thurman is a walking embodiment of eclecticism, ready to weave each new performance to her life's tapestry, "because it's a complete dance in your own development as a performer, in terms of what you are sharing of yourself, the demands of a new part and what it makes you dig in and find in those breakthrough moments where you do something that you didn't think was

And the proof is there on screen. United with a Hattori Hanzon Sword, Thurman delivers a blistering performance as Tarantino's weapon of choice, leaving a bodycount to shame Lone Wolf and Cub.

Having spent more than half her life in the spotlight, the vagaries of fame still puzzle the 34 year-old actress, despite currently riding the wave of a *Kill Bill* inspired career revival.

"We do struggle to want to bring you good movies, so you look at the script and you look at the director, you look at yourself, you'll look at anything, you'll read any tea leaf to try to find a way to deliver and make your effort not be in vain." She even considered giving away her career after the birth of her daughter. "I was like: how am I going to do this? This is a huge responsibility for me. I can't be like I was then and do this – I felt completely changed. So it took me a long time to reassemble myself as a woman and feel like I'm still a woman, I'm still an actress, I'm still vital like that and I am this."

"It's been the reason I haven't really felt entitled to work freely. Before you just work because you love to work, and because you need to get out of the house, or you work because you need to live, and you live inside your work in a way that you don't live anywhere else." Now, with her two children, it takes much more for her to accept a project. "What's worthy enough to interrupt this day or this life here? Or take this kid on the road? Then you start looking at everything with this insane amount of scrutiny and you're just conflicted. It just put a lot of pressure on those decisions I couldn't make. I was making decisions through a very complicated screen. So I just try to balance it, think things over and try to do the right thing; I just do my best, as any working mother will tell you."

The making of *Kill Bill Vol. 1* coincided with a turbulent time in Uma Thurman's private life, as her marriage to Ethan Hawke hit the rocks. Though it was exacerbated by media speculation (including a supposed fling with Tarantino which the director has denied), Thurman is philosophical about all the fuss. "I think the best way to handle it is to wish everybody well. It's like I've gotten so much out of my career and my life, who said there's going to be no cost? What's free?" she adds. "What, you should get to do what you love to do, live a great life, travel, experience new things and blow your own mind and what? You should be thanked for it? It's given me so much so sure, sometimes it's difficult, but I feel that attitude helps me deal with it better than any other attitude" she says with a serenity you can see in her opalescent eyes.

***Kill Bill* is available to buy from August 18 and is reviewed on page 70.**



To make *Kill Bill* Uma Thurman had to get her insides rewired. But as the Hollywood beauty explained, she also got to surf the universe with Quentin Tarantino.

ever reaching iconic status as a heroine. Uma Thurman herself points out, "I can say about this last year that I never really was a physically self-confident person. I was much more comfortable in a scene seated at a chair. I felt awkward."

Quentin Tarantino obviously knew better, presenting Uma Thurman with the script for *Kill Bill* and her role as The Bride as a 30th birthday present at the point of her self proclaimed "mid-life crisis". It was an opportunity too good for Uma to pass up. "Surfing the universe with a director like Quentin, with free-style creativity like his, to get to see someone be able to work in film so creatively and so freely and have the courage of their own convictions and do what they like, is not something you see every day." Tarantino was so convinced about his muse he even held over the start of production after Uma became pregnant.

With a father who was the first Westerner to be ordained a Tibetan Buddhist monk, and a

possible."

So, for someone who describes herself as an average gal who's skinny in places, fat in others and endowed with size 11 hoofs, being whipped into shape by martial arts choreographer Woo-Ping would surely be one of her greatest challenges. As Uma points out, it was also one of the most rewarding experiences she has had. "I was their Lindsay Wagner. I showed up, I was a mess and they basically opened her up and reconnected all those wires that nobody ever got right in the first place." She continues with genuine enthusiasm, "they taught me to be coordinated, it was really, really hard work, I didn't know if I'd get there, but I couldn't believe what they helped me do, and that sits in my body now in a whole different way, and as a woman that's like someone gave me something huge, someone made me feel strong, someone helped me make myself, I guess I should say. They changed me. They showed me something. It's really amazing."



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